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abridging, altering, and adding to a foreign book at his pleasure, without any reference whatever to the author. This liberty affords great advantages to their publishers. Within thirty days' sail of us there is a great country, where our language prevails. If a new book [or old periodical] is well received here, the American [English] publisher has only to reprint and sell it [or parts of it] as his own. The copyright costs him nothing, and he therefore enjoys without risk, as its success has been tested abundantly in this country, the double profits of author and publisher. We say nothing of the injustice which is thus done to American [English] writers, not because it is of small importance, but because we wish to view the subject exclusively as it relates to English [American]; for it must be obvious to every one, as long as this state of things lasts, and while there are so many writers and publishers in England [the United States], the American [English] publishers will have quite enough to occupy them in reprinting our works. An American [Englishman] would not be so foolish as to pay a native writer a fair price for his copyright of a work which he is not sure of selling when printed, if he can obtain for nothing the work of some English [American] author, of such well-known popularity, that the sale of an edition is certain. It is in this way, that it injures American [English] as well as English [American] writers." — *Monthly Review*, for 1838. Vol. I. pp. 59, 60.

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ART. V. — *Correspondence of WILLIAM PITT, Earl of Chatham, edited by the Executors of his Son, John, Earl of Chatham, and published from the Original Manuscripts in their Possession.* 4 vols. 8vo. London: John Murray. 1838 – 1840.

*Clarum et venerabile nomen* — *Gentibus*, said Edmund Burke, when paying his beautiful tribute to the memory of Lord Chatham; and nobody at this day repeats the quotation, who does not associate with it a vague feeling of admiration for that statesman and orator. Yet it is a singular fact, that his fame has been left to take care of itself more than that of any celebrated man of modern times. Such were his habits of seclusion, that, of his private life, the public, even of his own day, knew little or nothing. Of his

correspondence, no collection has ever been made till now, excepting a small volume published by Lord Grenville, in 1804. And of his great eloquence, the basis of his political fortune and the source of his fame, nothing remains but what the casual industry of contemporaries, eager to gratify the curiosity of the hour, has partially preserved. We gather our ideas of the orator rather from the almost marvellous accounts, given by witnesses, of the effects which he produced, than from any data submitted to our own judgment. For a long time after his death, the principal source of information about him was a collection of anecdotes, published by Almon, on very questionable authority, which doubtless served to disseminate both the false and the true, of which it was made up, far more widely than any regular biography would have done. The posthumous works of Horace Walpole have done something to enlarge and correct our knowledge of him, although, being written by no friendly hand, they must be read with much distrust. The volumes, which we have before us, make the first publication that has thus far been issued under the authority of his family. They are dedicated to the British public by the great grandsons of Lord Chatham, and appear to contain all the original papers that can now be recovered, wherewith to form a durable monument to his fame. Most readers will, however, be quite as much struck with their deficiencies, as with what they supply. Two unimportant letters, addressed to the Earl of Chesterfield in 1741, comprise every thing that could be gathered out of the first and largest period of his life, and bring us down at once to the time when Mr. Pitt's reputation as an orator in the House of Commons was made, and he was enjoying, as a consequence, the lucrative and distinguished, but not confidential, post of Paymaster-general of the forces. Even when we come, still later, to the most brilliant part of his career, there occurs every now and then a provoking *lacuna*, occasioned by the loss of most important links in the chain of the correspondence. So also with the speeches, of which we are led to infer, that not a vestige under the author's hand remains, from the fact that only such imperfect reports are here given of them to illustrate the text, as could be borrowed from the newspapers of the day, without having ever been either acknowledged or revised.

It is possible that an earlier attention to the subject might

have remedied, at least, a part of the deficiency we complain of. Perhaps there will be papers, hereafter called forth by the investigation to which this publication may give rise, which will shed more light upon it than we now have. Yet, after all, we cannot hope to know a great deal more of Lord Chatham than we now do. That great man, unlike most of his prototypes, appears to have been careless of posthumous fame. Though always exact in the selection of language, both in speaking and writing, this care on his part seems to have been exerted only for the immediate occasion. He corrected little, and published nothing, but left himself to be judged of by posterity through the imperfect and inadequate representations of others. This is a trying method for his reputation, but it may be more fair than that commonly adopted by great men. There must be more or less of gloss put upon those things which are made for show. Those who intend to obtain immortal fame seldom choose to exhibit themselves exactly as they are. And, strange to say, although the English are very proud of the name of Chatham, most of the panegyric which has been bestowed upon him, contains a large share of censure, generally unmerited, and often marking more the carelessness with which it is passed, than the discrimination of the censurer. Disdaining the slanders, which the creatures of the court were continually circulating about him, Lord Chatham, by his contempt, allowed many of them to creep to a place in history. For this reason, if there were no other, we think the editors have done no more than sheer justice to their ancestor, in publishing this work. The manner, in which they have done it, is also creditable. They have not yielded to the very strong temptation to eulogy which the opportunity presented to them, neither have they gone into studied explanations where Lord Chatham has been unjustly condemned. It is always the best course to leave the reader to form his own opinions from the original papers presented to his view, without striving to lead his judgment either by applause or apology. If this great man was often most harshly judged, he only met with the same fate that attends all who exercise great sway over the public mind in public affairs. "The falcon, towering in her pride of place," will be sometimes hawked at, even by the mousing owl. Calumny is the grand leveller of human pride. But the truth is at least as old as Tacitus, that he

who takes pains to perpetuate a slander, by honoring it with his notice, only makes himself the instrument more perfectly to execute the design his enemy had in setting it in motion. "Maledicta spreta exolescunt ; si irascaris, agnita videntur."

The life of the elder Pitt was one of constant struggle with men inferior in capacity to himself, and of questionable morals. A younger son of a family of little note, without fortune even sufficient for a modest subsistence, he was driven to a commission in the army as Cornet-of-horse, to obtain the means to keep himself in Parliament. At the age of twenty-seven, he entered public life, as the representative of Old Sarum, a nomination borough, held by his father. The grand marking distinction between him and all others of his time, is not so much his superior eloquence, for there were many good speakers in his day, as the principles upon which he founded his career. The politicians, with whom he started on his course, were many of them strong men, but all, without exception, professing low notions of political morals. There was Bolingbroke, who, in spite of his declarations, which seem for a time to have deceived even Pitt himself, will ultimately be classed among the most profligate of British political adventurers. There was Pulteney, whose patriotic invective against ministerial infidelity did not survive the possession of an Earl's coronet. There were Carteret, who, with all his genius and all his learning, was, after all, but an eccentric and a sensual-minded man ; and Chesterfield, whose hypocritical public doctrines so singularly contrast with the confidential sincerity of his private letters. And, last of all, there was Sir Robert Walpole, too honest not to despise the cant which was everywhere talked around him, but himself too long hackneyed in the ways of corrupting others to retain or even to profess faith in any political integrity whatsoever. Such was the school in the midst of which William Pitt came forward, a poor, and not highly befriended young man, and learned his alphabet in state affairs. His first efforts drew upon him the attention of the minister. Such was the power of his invective, that the sagacious Sir Robert is said to have exclaimed, "We must at all events muzzle that terrible cornet-of-horse." But, finding himself unable to compass that point, he contented himself with a paltry act of partisan proscription, and deprived of his cornetcy the man he could not muzzle. This act

had the not unusual effect of assisting the individual it was intended to destroy. For it armed him with the popular sympathy, the most powerful weapon which an orator can wield.

What the offers were which the minister made is not known, but they were doubtless such as he had been used to find acceptable to promising young men in Pitt's situation, and as nine out of ten in his day would have been glad to take up with. But Pitt's ambition was to gain power, and not mere place. His desire was to infuse his whole soul into the administration of the government of his country. Walpole, who was liberal of every thing but power, which he would consent to share with no one, therefore found, that he could not treat with him upon any common ground. As a consequence, Pitt remained steadily opposed to him, and with more vehemence than the judgment of his cooler moments, in after life, could entirely justify. The fall of Walpole effected no change in his position, excepting that the transfer of Pulteney to the Lords made him more unequivocally a leader in the House of Commons. The accession to power of the Pelhams, who were glad to become his patrons, proved favorable to his fortune, and their singular policy, in absorbing the chiefs of opposition into their own party without insisting upon union of sentiment, brought him into office. He became, in 1746, Vice-Treasurer of Ireland, and soon after attained the post of Paymaster of the forces.

We have already remarked upon the absence of all materials for his biography in the present work, up to the time of which we are now speaking. Yet it is tolerably apparent from what follows, that he was scarcely satisfied with the disposition that had been made of him, and sought for something more than money. But the prospect of his further promotion to real power was now suddenly obscured. In his period of opposition, he had inveighed with great severity upon that system of policy, introduced into British affairs by the Brunswick princes, which has been denominated *the Hanoverian policy*. Perhaps it is fortunate for his reputation for consistency, among those who require of a public man, that he should never change an opinion from the first hour of his appearance to the last, that these early specimens of his oratory have not been preserved. But we must, nevertheless, be allowed to regret the loss. They would have furnished a

good study to all the young men of the present day, in showing the various natural changes which the sentiments of so great a character underwent, as experience taught him the necessity of enlarging his principles of action with the sphere in which he was called to apply them. They would also have taught the folly of youthful violence, in a path so beset with thorns as that of politics, adding, as it does, superfluous obstacles to those which must be encountered at any rate. Mr. Pitt discovered, that he had unwittingly erected a barrier of prejudice against himself in the mind of George the Second, that threatened to be insuperable. He had done so, not so much by the opposition itself to the Hanoverian subsidies, as by the extreme to which he had carried it. One of three things now remained for him to do, — to retire from public life, and deprive his country of his valuable services altogether ; to remain for ever in an opposition as fruitless as it was excessive ; or, lastly, to concede to the temper of the monarch, and the general interests of the country, as much as he could without entirely surrendering his own opinions. Walpole had adopted the last course, and had been censured by Pitt for so doing ; but Walpole had, in substance, acted wisely, and Pitt, when arrived at the same place of observation, saw that he had. With that decision of mind, which marks the line between great minds and small ones, he preferred to incur the personal charge of inconsistency to the loss of the opportunity to advance the true interests of his country.

Yet to this day this charge against him has been perpetually harped upon. How far Pitt surrendered his principles, has never been made perfectly clear to us ; but it does not appear, that, before he himself became minister, he ever went further than a tacit acquiescence in the German measures, and after that time the country had become involved in a war which justified them. That he would not go far enough to please the sovereign, is very certain from the unintermitted hostility of that personage to him, which had the effect almost to drive him to despair. It is at the moment when the struggle between hope and fear was going on in his mind, that the present Correspondence begins to give us some assistance in understanding his character. Henry Pelham felt the value of Pitt's services in the House of Commons too strongly not to be anxious to assign to him a responsible post in the ministry ; and yet it may be doubted,

whether even he was not willing to make use of the King's prejudices against giving him the share of power which his talents and merit entitled him to claim. The Duke of Newcastle, with less of ability than his brother, adopted more unhesitatingly the same ambiguous course of policy towards him. To the King he contented himself with urging the merits of Mr. Pitt, and to Mr. Pitt he pleaded, in excuse for refusing him promotion, the displeasure of the King. For a time, Pitt seems to have been blinded to the truth, and to have supposed, that the concessions he had been willing to make would be deemed satisfactory. In 1750, we find him writing to the Duke of Newcastle, gratefully acknowledging the services which the Duke was doing him in the following penitent manner.

"I cannot conclude without assuring your Grace of my warmest gratitude for the kind use you were so good as to make of some expressions in my letter. Nothing can touch me so sensibly as any good office in that place where I deservedly stand in need of it so much, and where I have it so much at heart to efface the past by every action of my life." — Vol. I. p. 49.

This is surely no such tone of haughtiness as it has been usual to ascribe to the elder Pitt, but, if any thing, savours a little too much of common mortal weakness. It seems, however, to have always been a characteristic of him to cherish a romantic species of loyalty to the King's person, even in the midst of frequent, and not always moderate, opposition to the King's darling measures. The death of Henry Pelham soon brought his affairs to a crisis. A very interesting letter in the present collection, written at this time by Lord Hardwicke, then Lord Chancellor, to Pitt, shows, that mainly by that Lord's exertions with the King, the Duke of Newcastle was made the prime minister, but that his efforts to obtain for his correspondent the ministerial lead in the House of Commons proved fruitless. The monarch remained inexorable. Another letter follows, from the Duke himself, giving his account of the transaction, and deprecating the hostility which he feared might grow out of it to his own administration. Pitt's own letter, to which these were in answer, is unfortunately missing. It doubtless explained the feelings under which he was then laboring, — feelings which could not surprise, however much they



might alarm them. In the absence of that, we must content ourselves with the next letter in succession, being the reply to the Earl of Hardwicke. In this Mr. Pitt shows the effect upon him of such an ungenerous course of Royal policy.

“I cannot,” he says, “without much shame, so abuse your Lordship’s indulgence as to go back, but for a moment, into an unworthy subject, that has already caused you too much trouble, and which must unavoidably be filled with abundance of indecent egotism. But permit me to assure your Lordship, in the first place, that, far from having a doubt remaining on my mind, that more might have been done in my favor *on this occasion*, I think myself greatly indebted to your Lordship’s goodness, and will ever gratefully acknowledge the kind efforts you were pleased to make, to remove impressions that have entered so deep; but I hope your Lordship will not think me unreasonable, if I conclude, from the inefficacy of these efforts in such a want of subjects to carry on the King’s business in Parliament, and under his Majesty’s strong sense of that want, that these impressions are immovable.

“Your Lordship is pleased kindly to say, that some way is made, and that some future occasion may be more favorable for me. I am not able to conceive any such occasion possible. God forbid, the wants of his Majesty’s government should ever become more urgent! Such an unhappy distress can only arise from an event so fatal to this country, and which must deprive me of one of the two great protectors, whose friendship constitutes the only honor of my public life, that I will not carry my views or reasonings forward to that melancholy day. I might likewise add, (I conceive not unreasonably,) that every acquiescence to his Majesty’s negative (necessary as I am convinced it was to acquiesce) must confirm, and render more insurmountable, the resolution taken for my perpetual exclusion.

“This, I confess, continues to be strongly my view of my situation. It is very kind and generous in your Lordship to suggest a ray of distant, general hope to a man you see despairing, and to turn his view forward from the present scene to a future. But, my Lord, after having set out under suggestions of this general hope ten years ago, and bearing long a load of obloquy for supporting the King’s measures, and never obtaining, in recompense, the smallest remission of that displeasure I vainly labored to soften, all ardor for public business is really extinguished in my mind, and I am totally deprived of all consideration, by which alone I could have been of any use. The weight of immovable Royal displeasure is a load too great to

move under ; it must crush any man ; it has sunk and broke me. I succumb, and wish for nothing but a decent and innocent retreat, wherein I may no longer, by continuing in the public stream of promotion, for ever stick fast aground, and afford to the world the ridiculous spectacle of being passed by every boat that navigates the same river. To speak without a figure, I will presume upon your Lordship's great goodness to me to tell my utmost wish ; it is, that a retreat, not void of advantage, or derogatory to the rank of the office I hold, might, as soon as practicable, be opened to me. In this view, I take the liberty to recommend myself to your Lordship's friendship, as I have done to the Duke of Newcastle's. Out of his Grace's immediate province, accommodations of this kind arise, and to your joint protection, and to that only, I wish to owe the future satisfaction of my life." — Vol. i. pp. 105, 106.

That so proud a spirit should have been, even for a moment, subdued enough to ask for a pension, to retire upon in the fullness of his powers, will serve to show the nature of the obstacles which he must have encountered in his progress. Indeed, abilities even of the highest class, stand no great chance in England, when unsupported either by wealth, strong family connexion, or professional success. Walpole tells us, that Mr. Pitt had no party in Parliament, but that the public opinion pointed him out as one out of the three candidates for the place of ministerial leader at this time. Henry Fox and Murray were the other two ; — the first, a good debater, but a man far inferior in power to Pitt, with few scruples to stand in his way to place ; the other, soon afterwards removed from politics to a high judicial seat, which he long adorned under the title of Lord Mansfield. Mr. Pitt was only sustained by the popular conviction of his fitness, but Mr. Fox was the favorite at court. The Duke of Newcastle, however, though little inclined to trust either of them, was anxious to avail himself of the services of both. His policy became that of playing one off against the other. In this view it was, that Sir Thomas Robinson was pitched upon for Secretary of State, a person notoriously ill qualified for the duty of leading in Parliament ; and it was given out that His Majesty would have no leader in the House of Commons, but expected that his servants would act in concert, and not quarrel among themselves. An admirable arrangement, truly, for the Prime Minister, but one which could hardly be esteemed either honorable or satisfactory to the

persons required to adopt it. Neither could it fail to happen, that those who felt themselves trifled with, should soon unite to make every part of it nugatory.

And, after all, what did this whole game amount to, but an effort of little men to keep down as long as they could a great one? The King felt, that, if he once opened the door of the closet to Mr. Pitt, he should introduce a master. And the leading members of the all-powerful whig aristocracy, who filled the avenues to the throne, intuitively favored an exclusion which suited their little ends and narrow ambition. Thus far the policy had proved successful. It was but slowly that Mr. Pitt opened his mind to the conviction that nothing would come of his conciliatory disposition, and that, if the closet was to be taken by him at all, it must be by storm. We perceive a dawn of this conviction in a paper of remarks, drawn up in his own hand, on the ultimate disruption by him of his agreement with Mr. Fox, whom the Duke of Newcastle ultimately succeeded in drawing off. At the close of this remarkable paper, he says,

“If I have flattered myself in vain with the hope the Royal mind must relent, — when the hard, irrevocable decree, together with the grounds of it, is known to me, I may take my final part as reason will warrant, according to the necessity imposed on me. I shall then be enabled, upon certainty and knowledge, to determine either for acquiescence as I am, or resistance of what I hope I don’t deserve, or for a retreat from both.” — Vol. i. p. 137.

The Duke of Newcastle does not appear to have been a bad man. His public principles were generally sound, but he seldom paid so much attention to them as he did to the details of narrow political combinations. His greatest vice was one not uncommon with men who remain long in public station; that of insincerity and shuffling. So long as he could hold out false hope to Mr. Pitt, and deceive him with professions, he felt safe. But when that gentleman at last cut him short in one of his speeches by saying “Fewer words, my Lord, if you please, for your words have long lost all weight with me,” he felt that his greatest reliance was gone. The next thing that we hear of Pitt is in the House of Commons; and the story, as told by Horace Walpole, is so admirably illustrative of his oratorical talent, that we cannot forbear to place it here.

“ An election petition being in agitation, the House thin and idle, a younger Delaval had spoken pompously and abusively against the petitioner, and had thrown the House into a laughter on the topic of bribery and corruption. Pitt, who was in the gallery, started and came down with impetuosity, and, with all his former fire, said, ‘ He had asked what occasioned such an uproar ; lamented to hear a laugh on such a subject as bribery ! Did they try *within* the House to diminish our own dignity, when such attacks were made upon it from without ? that it was almost lost ! that it wanted support ! that it had long been vanishing ! scarce possible to recover it ! that he hoped the Speaker would extend a saving hand to raise it ; he only could restore it, — yet scarce he ! He called on all to assist, or else *we should only sit to register the arbitrary edicts of One too powerful a subject.*’ This thunderbolt, thrown in a sky so long serene, confounded the audience ; Murray crouched, silent and terrified. Legge scarce rose to say with great humility, ‘ That he had been raised solely by the Whigs, and if he fell, sooner or later, he should pride himself in nothing but in being a Whig.’ ”

This burst upon the Duke of Newcastle, was but the prelude to more decisive measures. The celebrated speech of Mr. Pitt, in November 1755, upon the treaties of subsidy for Hanover, showed, that, whatever he might have conceded, his general principles had never been abandoned. The Duke removed him from his office in consequence, but granted him, at the urgent solicitation of his wife and her brother, Earl Temple, a pension, which had no effect in relaxing his opposition. Perhaps this might have proved unavailing against Fox and parliamentary numbers, had it not been for the breaking out of a war with France. The loss of Minorca created such a popular clamor, that the minister, feeling his incompetency for such a crisis, at last gave way. The Duke resigned, declaring at the same time, not only that he could not, but that no one, excepting Mr. Pitt, could carry on the government. As a necessary consequence, the King found himself at last forced to smother his feelings, and to call to his councils the man whom he hated, whom the nobility envied, who had no party in the House of Commons, and who had his only support in the supereminence of his abilities, and the universal opinion entertained of his independent spirit throughout the British nation. Yet, even then, it was not until after months passed in efforts to get rid of him, which, at one moment, succeeded so far as to tempt the monarch to

order him to resign the post which he had obtained, not until it was made plain by experiment, that the Duke of Newcastle had told the truth, that things finally settled down into something like a durable system. No minister, in English history, had ever before surmounted so many obstacles to the possession of power. None had ever been raised upon such a basis of support. Mr. Pitt became a minister by the nomination of the popular will overbearing all sorts of opposition. "The temper of the nation," says Walpole, "left him master, to take whatever resolution he pleased." And the resolution he took, was to repay to the people who trusted him, in its full extent, the obligation under which they had laid him.

Let us again, for a moment, take notice of the charge of inconsistency which has been brought against Mr. Pitt. It is somewhat remarkable, that Walpole, the principal authority for it, should, in substance, contradict himself in the very act of bringing it forward. Whilst he, on the one hand, admits that he came into power at last rather imposing than receiving conditions, and that it was his adherence to a restrictive policy regarding Hanover, which caused the fruitless attempt by the King to throw him off, he, on the other hand, accuses him of openly and unblushingly coming down to the House of Commons, and demanding the very subsidies which he had before so vehemently opposed. Admitting for a moment the facts to be as he states them, we are at a loss to know, what selfish motive could be supposed to prompt the change. He had gained and kept his post in opposition to the King's will upon this very subject. Is it more likely that he would sacrifice his opinions after he had gained his object, than before, when he might hope for some benefit from doing so? It is easier to account for his behaviour by believing, that he had become by his change of position convinced, that his resistance had been carried rather too far. "My Lord," he said to the Duke of Devonshire, "I am sure I can save this country, and nobody else can." This, which might in other mouths have seemed a proud and idle boast, he proceeded, so far as he was concerned, to prove true. But, in maturing his plan for the purpose, it can hardly be doubted, that he saw the necessity of at least modifying his opinions as to the German policy, so far as to make them conform to the exigency of the war he was about to wage. He did so, and

became inconsistent. But this is a species of inconsistency, which, like his ambition, may be made a subject of reproach to Mr. Pitt without reflecting upon him any dishonor.

There is something in this matter of inconsistency in political men, which deserves to be considered more at large than our limits will allow. We remember the name of scarcely any very celebrated statesman, of either ancient or modern times, against whom the charge has not been brought. So shadowy is the line between right and wrong, and so susceptible is what we take to be the true rule of conduct in this respect, of being abused by bad men for bad purposes, that we are not surprised to find weak men prefer to stick to the letter of their professions, as the safer guide, through all the changing scenes over which they pass. Indeed, one must establish a moral system very firm and highly refined in order to walk with perfect steadiness over the burning ploughshares of political life. There is, in the collection of letters by that wonderful statesman Cicero, a series addressed to Lentulus, in which he lays down rules of action in different circumstances, that are apt to startle a young man with all his abstract ideas of the true, and perfect, and right, fresh about him, but which recommend themselves to his attention more and more as the passage of time makes moral duties something more to him than a charming study. It is in one of those letters, that he says, "*Nunquam enim præstantibus in republicâ gubernandâ viris laudata est in unâ sententiâ perpetua permansio : sed, ut in navigando tempestati obsequi artis est, etiamsi portum tenere non queas ; cum vero id possis mutatâ velificatione assequi, stultum est eum tenere cum periculo cursum, quem ceperis, potius quam, eo commutato, quo velis, tandem pervenire : sic, cum omnibus nobis in administrandâ republicâ propositum esse debeat id, quod a me sæpissime dictum est, cum dignitate otium ; non idem semper dicere, sed idem semper spectare, debemus.*" Words may be modified without hazard, but the principles of conduct must always remain the same. The moral of this passage may be better understood by contrasting it with the far more degrading doctrine of that astonishing compound of the purest and coarsest elements of human nature, Lord Bacon. "All rising to great place," he says, "is by a winding stair ; and, if there be factions, it is good to side a man's self whilst he is in the rising, and to balance himself when he is placed." The one has reference

to the great impulses which may be given to the motion of human affairs, the other merely to the narrow and selfish considerations of personal advancement. The one is the idea of a practical and a virtuous statesman, the other the crafty suggestion of an adept in the intrigues of a court. Both, however, come from the first minds of their race, improved and exercised by long practical acquaintance with the business of life, and both from the personal experience they respectively had of the truth of them in their career.

We are aware of the shelter that bad men can find even under the discrimination which we have attempted to make. Wide as is the distance between the notion of strict right, which a man may hold in his closet, or while acting independently of others, and what he will find himself able to do when in situations restrained and hampered by circumstances beyond his control, and subject to the action of minds cast in an inferior mould, we much fear, that holding him rigidly to maintain his opinions, would be equivalent to an exclusion of the conscientious from all opportunity of acting at all, and giving to the vicious the undisputed control over public affairs. It may be true here, as Lord Chatham says it is of another great maxim, "*Omne solum forti patria est*," "that it has supported some good and great men under the persecutions of faction, but how dangerous is it to trust frail, corrupt man with such an aphorism ! What fatal casuistry is it big with ! How many a villain might and has masked himself in the sayings of ancient illustrious exiles, while he was, in fact, dissolving all the nearest and dearest ties that hold societies together, and spurning at all laws divine and human !" Yet, after all, when the current of human life makes decisions upon emergencies like these unavoidable, it remains for posterity to judge, upon a calm review of the conformity that actually took place between profession and practice through a whole career, whether the motives that actuated the conduct in question were honest or not. Such a test, applied to Mr. Pitt, will not be unfavorable to his reputation ; for he sufficiently proved, by a long life passed in the midst of the temptations of a court, that neither wealth, nor power, nor dignities, had charms enough with him to outweigh his own principles, or the honor of the people whom he strove to serve.

It is an opinion occasionally advanced by writers on the British form of government, that, as in theory the sover-

eign is not, and his ministers are, held responsible for the direction of affairs, he ought not to have any control over them, further than what those in office for the time being may incline to concede to him. We have always regarded the doctrine as unsound in theory, and at variance with all the practice known under the system. The King is, it is true, a king with limited powers, and measures as well as men are not infrequently pressed upon him, which he cannot safely refuse, however much he may dislike them ; but, on the other hand, he is in many cases a real king, and not a puppet, and in his turn forces upon his ministers and his people what is not a whit more acceptable to them. Instances of both kinds abound in the reign of William, and of the first three Brunswick princes. Perhaps the most remarkable one is the Hanoverian policy of which we have been treating. It never was approved, either by the nation, or by any substantial administration, from the day of Lord Townsend down to that of the elder Pitt ; and yet it was persevered in through all that time. This naturally leads us to notice another peculiarity in the same form of government, which is the difficulty attending an attempt to make any sudden change of policy from that which has once been adopted. It is probably for this reason, that, whatever may have been the diversity of sentiment entertained by different men before they rose to be ministers, they have rarely failed, when in power, to carry on substantially one and the same general system. Changes have occasionally taken place, it is true, but they have been so gradually introduced, that the action of the whole machine has not been perceptibly disturbed. This may account for the steady aggrandizement of Great Britain, while other countries have vacillated or gone backwards. It may also account for the comparatively slight effect, which a feeble and incompetent ministry had upon the national prosperity, as well as for the amazing impulse which an able and energetic one gave to it in an incredibly short space of time.

Mr. Pitt found his country embarrassed by a war, which had thus far been feebly carried on, and in alliance with only one foreign prince, who seemed on the point of being overwhelmed by the powerful combination that had been formed against him. It was not a moment for him to stop, or turn back, or sacrifice that ally. He could not have done it without for ever destroying the weight of his country in the balance of



Europe. His hand was on the plough left in the middle of the furrow, and he had no choice but to drive it through. But this he could do in a style far different from that of his predecessor. The languid and sleepy figures of the old school looked on with stupid amazement at what they called Pitt's folly, as expedition went out after expedition against the enemy in opposite quarters of the globe, unparalyzed by defeat, and only stimulated to greater exertion by disappointment. Even Lord Anson is said to have been required to place the whole navy at the disposal of the minister, by signing instructions without reading; and officer was thrown aside after officer, who proved unequal to the efforts expected of them, until the chief alighted upon spirits congenial with his own. No man had ever been so absolute over public opinion, in Parliament or out of it, and no man had ever before demanded public service as the sole condition of public rewards. The consequence was immediate. The heroic Wolfe shone forth at once, about to become, at the age of thirty, the daring instrument to annihilate the French power in one of the four quarters of the globe; — a youth, who, even in the very boat that was bearing him to his bed of immortality on the heights of Abraham, could stop to dwell with delight upon the lines of a poet, who was then adding another leaf to the chaplet of his country's glory. Full of melancholy foreboding of the failure of that desperate enterprise, which turned out equal to the most brilliant exploits of antiquity, he could yet repeat to his officers, among others, the lines

“The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
Await alike the inevitable hour;  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave,”

and cry out, “Now, Gentlemen, I would rather be the author of that poem than take Quebec.”\* Such a man, in his spirit, was worthy of the poet whom he lauded, and, in deed, of the minister who had preferred him, and all three, of the country which, in their respective modes, they were equally striving

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\* This anecdote is beautifully told by Grahame, in the third volume of his “History of the United States,” — a work of great merit, because founded on the love of moral truth. The author is at last dead, without ever meeting with that reward in the popular favor which he always longed for, and ought to have received.

to honor and exalt. Alas ! that Wolfe should himself have furnished the next striking illustration of the bard's truth. There was also rising in the opposite hemisphere, in the person of Clive, another daring adventurer, who was doing, by a more painful process, for Great Britain in India, what Wolfe accomplished at a stroke in America. Sir Edward Hawke and Sir Charles Saunders, under the guidance of the same great mind, were spreading the British dominion over the ocean. And what was the result ? In three years, the man, whom Horace Walpole accuses of pardoning nothing in any one but a victory, could look over the globe and find no cause of offence.

Strange, indeed, would it have been if such a minister had not conciliated the most inimical sovereign by such incense as his policy was daily administering to his pride. But George the Second, although reconciled to the minister, never overcame his prejudice against his Grenville connexions, on whose account, once or twice in his life, Pitt suffered some inconvenience. With this exception, the aristocracy, overborne for the moment by such splendor of success as they could not even cavil at, looked on with envy rather than admiration. In truth, Mr. Pitt courted nobody, and conciliated nobody. He felt himself the agent of the nation, and sought support only in the moral power which his successful system gave him over the popular heart. It has been objected to him by a man, himself a great statesman, that he was governed too much by general maxims ; and perhaps the charge is not without some foundation. Pitt should have remembered, that in the natural world the feeblest and most insignificant of insects have power to hurt the noblest of the animal creation. He conceded the patronage of the crown to the Duke of Newcastle, without duly reflecting that he was arming a traitor with weapons to use against himself at the first opportunity. And all the nobility were, like their head, in secret chafing under a subjection new as it was extraordinary, and anxiously waiting the first occasion of throwing it completely off. In the work before us, we have a short specimen of the tone which some of them ventured to hold towards Pitt.

“ THE EARL OF EXETER TO MR. PITT.

(1757 – S.)

“ Sir, — Since you seem determined not to give me admit-

tance into your house, I must have recourse to this method of acquainting you with my business. It was to have known from your own mouth, why the Rutland militia were ordered to march, after I had requested they might not, and you had assured me they should not; at the same time promising they should be embodied, to prevent their 'listing into the regulars.

"Depending on this assurance, I have informed the officers and men, that they were not to march at this unseasonable time of the year, but to perfect themselves in their exercise against the summer; and, by relying on your word, I have broke mine to the whole country.

"As your time is so much taken up, I must desire you will order Mr. Wood to send me word why I have been deceived.

"I am your humble servant,

"EXETER.\*

"Bristol is near two hundred miles from Rutland."

The answer is very characteristic.

"MR. PITT TO THE EARL OF EXETER.

(1757-8.)

"My Lord, — The matter of your Lordship's letter surprises me as much as the style and manner of it. I never deceive, nor suffer any man to tell me I have deceived him. I declare upon my honor, I know nothing of the order to march the Rutlandshire militia, if any such be given. I desire, therefore, to know what your Lordship means by presuming to use the expression of being deceived by me. I am your Lordship's humble servant.

W. PITT.

"I delay going out of town till I hear from your Lordship."

— Vol. i. pp. 293, 294.

The elements of discontent with Pitt remained dormant during the rest of the second George's reign, but the accession of his grandson very soon presented the desired opportunity to rouse them all. There is abundant evidence, in the confidential notes to his wife written by Pitt, that he was straining every effort to conquer, only the more certainly to secure a peace. But when he had at last forced France into a negotiation, he had occasion very soon to perceive, that that wily Court was only seeking to gain time, in order the more certainly to involve Spain in a quarrel with

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\* Brownlow, ninth Earl of Exeter, at this time Lord-Lieutenant of the county of Rutland. Though without date, this letter, as well as the answer, was no doubt written during the winter of 1757-8."

Great Britain, and to force her to join in the war. This was in fact done by the ratification of the Family Compact, a movement that at once convinced Pitt no half-way measures should be preserved. He therefore determined to push the court of Spain at once to a rupture. The measure was bold, and, if it had been adopted when proposed, we think could scarcely have failed to make Great Britain the arbitress of the politics of Europe. But it proved too strong for the nerves of the rest of the Cabinet ministers. The intrigues, which had been hatching about the court, were suddenly brought to maturity by the somewhat injudicious precipitation of the object against whom they were directed. Lord Bute, who had been secretly working ever since the commencement of the new reign to gain the control of affairs, now came out openly in opposition, and was ultimately joined by all the ministers but Lord Temple. Mr. Pitt declared in the cabinet, "that he was called to the ministry by the voice of the people, to whom he conceived himself accountable for his conduct, and that he could not remain in a situation which made him responsible for measures he was no longer allowed to guide." The truth of this speech brought upon him a sharp rebuke from the President of the Council, Lord Granville, who expressed himself particularly disgusted at the mention of the voice of the people in the King's Council. The two dissentient ministers resigned. Lord Bute and his coadjutors were compelled, in a few months, to make that very declaration of war against Spain, for recommending which they had driven them to resign. And Bubb Doddington, that paragon of disinterestedness and public virtue, addressed the new premier in loud notes of exultation; "I sincerely wish your Lordship joy of being delivered of a most impracticable colleague, his Majesty of a most imperious servant, and the people of a most dangerous minister. I am told that the people are sullen about it. Be that as it may, I think it my duty to my most gracious sovereign and my generous friend to say, that, if I can be of any service to either in any thing that is most dangerous and difficult, I am most ready to undertake it." He doubtless thought, that he could easily supply the vacuum which had been created.

We have said, that the resignation of Pitt was injudicious and precipitate. He appears to us to have needlessly fallen into the snare that had been laid for him. A little more pa-

tience would have forced the members of the cabinet to come round at last to his opinion, and would have enabled him to crown a glorious war with an honorable and lasting peace. But impetuosity, which is the virtue of an orator, is often a vice in a Counsellor and Minister of State. The consequence was, that Bute tried to gain by the peace something of the honor, which belonged of right to the policy of Pitt, and then suddenly slunk from the storm of popular indignation, which the retirement of the latter had raised against him. And the King had his share of punishment, in becoming the sport of the factions into which the aristocracy was divided.

Of this brilliant period of Mr. Pitt's career, there is but a single incident more, upon which we design to dwell. It appears, that, upon the occasion of his audience had of the King for the purpose of resigning his seals of office, a few kind words, addressed to him by George the Third, affected him to tears. "I confess, Sir," he said, "I had but too much reason to expect your Majesty's displeasure. I had not come prepared for this exceeding goodness. Pardon me, Sir, it overpowers, — it oppresses me." And when Lord Bute wrote to him of the King's desire to offer him either the Government of Canada, the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster, or any thing he would himself prefer to point out, he answered in terms full of humility and gratitude, declining the offices, but requesting a pension for his family. And when this was granted, together with a peerage, to his wife, he replied, that "he had not words to express the sentiments of veneration and gratitude with which he received the unbounded effects of beneficence and grace, which the most benign of sovereigns had condescended to bestow on him and those most dear to him." These expressions and this conduct have been made the basis of reproach by a late writer, Lord Brougham, as "marking traits of a somewhat vulgar, if not a sordid kind, to be found on a closer inspection of his character." It may be so ; but we cannot help thinking the judgment harsh, if not erroneous. It must be remembered, that Mr. Pitt was, in a great degree, the architect of his own fortune ; that he never possessed the independence springing from large pecuniary resources ; that, when in lucrative situations, like that of Paymaster, he had refused to avail himself

of advantages in the use of the public money, which others, before him, had invariably considered as attached to the place ; and, lastly, that he had had to contend with the personal hostility of one sovereign for many years, and had only just conquered it, when he was threatened with a renewal of it in the person of another, his successor. Considering all these things in connexion with his ardent temperament, his romantic notions of loyalty, and his strong domestic attachment to wife and children, we cannot go so far as to designate a few phrases of sudden exuberant feeling, upon receiving a benefit where he had reason to expect nothing but coldness, as either sordid or vulgar traits of character. As a mere popularity-hunter, no doubt, Mr. Pitt would have acted more prudently in declining all proffered favors, and in walking into the House of Commons loud-mouthed against the sovereign and the cabal, who had driven him out of office. He never professed himself indifferent to rewards for services rendered, although he disdained trading in pensions and sinecures, given without consideration. We think, therefore, that, although it would have been, perhaps, more consistent with his general greatness of character, if he had declined, instead of accepting, the favors conferred upon him, yet such acceptance does not merit the name either of vulgarity or sordidness.

But we find that we shall not be able, within our limits, to follow the track of this noble statesman minutely. He returned to his seat as a mere member of the Commons, without indulging in complaints or repining, or any of the selfish dissatisfaction which marks the character of a mere demagogue. Neither could he content himself to enter into the factious combinations, which are constantly forming among the outs, with the design to get into office. "All I can say is this, that I move in the sphere only of measures. Quarrels at court, or family reconciliations, shall never vary my fixed judgment of things. Those who, with me, have stood by the cause of liberty and the national honor, upon true Revolution-principles, will never find me against them, till they fall off, and do not act up to those principles." Such were his words, addressed to Thomas Walpole, and he made them good. He led the opposition against the peace of 1763, in the case of the general warrants, and the American stamp act, with just as much ardor and energy as if he had never

received any favor whatever from the crown. This, we apprehend will account for the singular inconsistency, which most writers fall into, when speaking in one breath of his loss of popularity in consequence of accepting his pension, and in the next of his influence in the nation being at its height not long after that period. Lord Brougham, for example, whom we have already had occasion to quote, when finishing his sketch of Lord Chatham, appears to us to have rather forced the truth in this respect for the sake of better rounding his last periods. "Lord Chatham's popularity," he says, "struck down by his pension, was afterwards annihilated by his peerage." This might have been so, had Mr. Pitt been like Pulteney, a second-rate person, purchased by an earldom. But the people of England care not how many pensions or titles are heaped on a man by the court, the moment after they become convinced that these have not shut his mouth, or enslaved his mind. What made William Pitt to be Lord Chatham, but his commanding popularity in the nation years after he had received his pension? And what made all parties unite, upon his death, to grant honors before unheard of to his memory, but the universal opinion entertained of his merit long after he had accepted his peerage? If ever there was a popular idol in Great Britain, that idol was Lord Chatham. That he experienced occasional great fluctuations in that popularity, is no more than what has happened, in a greater or less degree, to every public man in the course of a long life. It is, we think, the greatest proof of the prodigious hold he had upon the nation's affections, that he could do what has annihilated other men, and yet suffer only a temporary estrangement of them.

Yet Pitt was very far from being the sort of person calculated for great popularity. He was cold in his manners, haughty, and often even overbearing. Chesterfield tells us, that, in his most agreeable moods, one might discern a consciousness of his own superior talents. He took not much pains to conceal his contempt for small men, whether aristocrats or demagogues. In illustration of this, we will here annex extracts from letters to two persons of these respective classes. The first of them was written, in 1764, to the Duke of Newcastle, that great plotter of parliamentary combinations, in answer to some proposals for negotiation. Re-

ferring to certain letters, that had been enclosed for his perusal, he says ;

“ As to the letters, which your Grace has done me the honor to transmit to me, and which I herewith return enclosed, I can only present my best acknowledgments for the favorable sentiments which moved your Grace to make to me such a communication. As for the matter itself, (which I perceive was not intended for my consideration,) I must entreat your Grace to excuse me from offering any opinion whatever, as to the steps which you may think proper to take relating thereto. Of that, your Grace, who has to consider the various personal attachments which follow you, can be the only fit judge. As for *my single self*, I purpose to continue acting through life upon the best convictions I am able to form, and under the obligation of principles, not by the force of any particular bargains. I presume not to judge for those, who think they see daylight to serve their country by such means ; but shall continue myself, as often as I think it worth the while to go to the House, to go there *free* from stipulations about every question under consideration, as well as to come out of the House as free as I entered it. I have some right to hope, that your Grace will not attribute this reserve to want of confidence, having *declared, most explicitly, on all occasions*, that, whatever I think it my duty to oppose or to promote, I shall do it, independent of the sentiments of others.

“ Continuing, then, unalterable in the way of thinking your Grace was no stranger to, not to mix myself, nor to suffer others to mix me, in any bargains or stipulations whatever, I could much have wished your Grace had not done me the great honor to ask my advice upon the matter proposed to your Grace ; and I humbly and earnestly entreat, that for the future, the consideration of me may not weigh at all, in any answer your Grace may have to make to propositions of a political nature. Having seen the close of last session, and the system of that great war, in which my share of the ministry was so largely arraigned, given up by *silence* in a full House, I have little thought of beginning the world again upon a new centre of union. Your Grace will not, I trust, wonder, if, after so recent and so strange a phenomenon in politics, I have no disposition to quit the free condition of a man, standing *single* and daring to appeal to his country at large upon the soundness of his principles, and the rectitude of his conduct.” — Vol. II. pp. 296, 297.

The other letter was addressed to a zealous political clergyman, who seems to have imagined that Mr. Pitt countenanced Mr. Wilkes because he was a factious demagogue,



and not because in his person he was sustaining the principles of liberty, and who, on account of the cry against Lord Bute, offered his services to write a pamphlet against the union with Scotland. It was as follows.

“MR. PITT TO THE REV. PAUL SHENTON.

“Hayes, December 8, 1764.

“SIR,—Having received a letter signed with the name to which I direct this, I cannot defer a moment expressing my astonishment and concern, that one of your rank, a clergyman, could so misconceive of me, as to imagine that I countenanced libels, because I disapproved part of the methods of proceeding relating to them. Let me undeceive you, Sir, by telling you, that no well-wisher of mine, which you are so good as to say you are, can have led you into this error. I have ever abhorred such odious and dangerous writings; and, in the late unhappy instance of the ‘North Briton,’ no man concurred more heartily than I did, in condemning and branding so licentious and criminal a paper.

“Next, as to a pamphlet, which you say you have thoughts of writing, to exhort the people of England to repeal the act of union, and which you wish to dedicate to me, or to the great magistrate you mention [Chief Justice Pratt, afterwards Lord Camden]; know, Sir, that I revere the Union, as the main foundation of the strength and security of this Island; that it was the great object of our immortal deliverer, King William; that France may wish to dissolve it, but that all good Englishmen will ever maintain it inviolate.

“You will, I doubt not, accept in good part, this free but not unuseful admonition to misguided zeal; and, if you really favor me with your good wishes, you will be glad to understand me aright. Be assured, then, Sir, that I disdain and detest faction, as sincerely as I reverence and love the laws, rights, privileges, and honor of my country.

“I am, Sir, your obedient, humble servant,

“WILLIAM PITT.

“P. S. This letter to you may serve for all, who, like you, are so widely mistaken concerning me.”—Vol. II. pp. 302, 303.

This, certainly, is not the tone of a person courting popularity by unworthy arts. It is scarcely that which will retain popularity, even with the strongest recommendations of merit. What, then, it may be asked, was the secret of Pitt’s extraordinary power? We think it was the great moral strength of his character, aided by his powers of elo-

quence. Men of talents had been common in England for centuries, but an individual relying upon himself alone for his promotion, and adhering to a pure and exalted system of political morality, through all the stages of his career, was something of a novelty. The people of England had been accustomed to hear patriots in the House of Commons before they became placemen, and they had been accustomed to see combinations of all kinds, among the factions in Parliament that then ruled the country, formed with little regard to any other principle than that of acquiring power ; but the idea of a single man connecting himself with none of them, further than he could conscientiously act with them, was what they had not been used to. This was what earned for Pitt the name of an impracticable man. Such men as Doddington, whose only guide in public life was his seven nomination boroughs, could not approach him. And most of the aristocracy dreaded him, whose principles of action were so far above their own, that they were unable to comprehend them. The King found, that he could not do with him or without him. His mere refusal to sustain a ministry was equivalent to its downfall, whilst there was no disposition in the court to accede to any system, which he would himself point out. The letters relative to the negotiation of 1763, are in the collection before us, and, we think, show very clearly the nature of the obstacles that were put in his way, and the treachery with which he was surrounded. Finding that the popularity which he enjoyed was the great barrier to the progress of every administration formed independently of him, the plot appears to have been to draw him into a negotiation, the failure of which should appear to arise from his own unreasonable and extravagant dictation of terms to the King, so that his support, in the public opinion, might be the easier undermined. For nothing could be more easy to do than what Doddington says he and Lord Bute did against the same person upon another occasion, that is, “to agree upon getting runners, and to settle what he would disperse.” This scheme was, to a certain extent, successful for the moment, although we can now decide, by the aid of the papers before us, that Pitt was the deceived, and not the faulty party.

Thus far we have quoted from the public letters of our author. But there is another light in which he shines very brightly. We mean his domestic character. What can

there be, for example, more charming than the following letters, written upon the occasion of his great triumph in the repeal of George Grenville's Stamp Act?

"LADY CHATHAM TO MR. PITT.

"Hayes, past nine, Saturday, February 22, 1766.

"Joy to you, my dear love. The joy of thousands is yours, under Heaven, who has crowned your endeavours with such happy success. May the Almighty give to mine and to the general prayers, that you may wake without any increased gout, or any cold, that may threaten it, by and by! I will hope that Mr. Onslow may have been a true prophet, and that what you saw yesterday, and what Johnson tells me you *heard*, the gratitude of a rescued people, have cured you.

"I cannot tell you with what pleasure my eyes opened upon the news. All my feelings tell me that I hate oppression, and that I love zealously the honor of my dear husband. I must not be sorry that I do not see you to-day; it would be too great a hurry, and it is fit you should rejoice with those, that have *triumphed* under you.

"I hope that little Hester's cough is something better; much I cannot say; but, as it has begun to yield, I trust we shall soon get the better of it. She and John are by no means indifferent to the news. Eager Mr. William I have not yet seen. A thousand thanks for your dear note of yesterday. The hounds are just discovered in Dock Mead, and have animated us into a charming noise; which would be inconvenient, if I had more to add than that I am

"Your ever faithful and loving wife,

"CHATHAM.

"You will keep Smith as long as you please, till it is convenient for you to see him. I do not understand the House dividing at half-past twelve, and you not being at home till half-past two."

"MR. PITT TO LADY CHATHAM.

"February 22, past four, 1766.

"Happy, indeed, was the scene of this glorious *morning* (for at past one we divided), when the sun of liberty shone once more benignly upon a country, too long benighted. My dear love, not all the applauding joy, which the hearts of animated gratitude saved from despair and bankruptcy, uttered in the lobby, could touch me, in any degree, like the tender and lively delight, which breathes in your warm and affectionate note.

"All together, my dearest life, makes me not ill to-day after the immense fatigue, or not feeling that I am so. Wonder not if I should find myself in a placid and sober fever, for tumultuous exultation, you know, I think not permitted to feeble mortal successes; but my delight, heartfelt and solid as it is, must want its sweetest ingredient (if not its very essence), till I rejoice with my angel, and with her join in thanksgivings to protecting Heaven for all our happy deliverances.

"Thank you for the sight of Smith; his honest joy and affection charm me. Loves to the sweet babes, patriotic or not; though I hope impetuous William is not behind in feelings of that kind. Send the saddle-horses, if you please, so as to be in town early to-morrow morning. I propose and hope to execute my journey to Hayes by eleven.

"Your ever loving husband,

"W. PITT."

— Vol. II. pp. 391–393.

There is something inexpressibly charming to us in the background, which a cultivation of the domestic affections forms in the picture of a great statesman. And this not so much because of the beauty which it gives to life in every condition, as of the assurance it furnishes in this instance of the sincerity of Pitt's public virtue. Let us contrast for a moment the character of Sir Robert Walpole with that of Pitt, and see how immeasurably the latter rises. The former a scorner of private morals, crediting his wife's infidelity and certain of his own, fond of ribald jokes and the vilest scandal of a corrupt court, without faith in the integrity of others, and perpetually guiding his course upon the assumption of their want of it, his public policy partook of the taint which infected his private life; whilst Pitt, on the contrary, makes the splendid bursts of his eloquence a regular deduction from the maxims of his domestic fireside. To his wife, to his sons, and to his nephew, he is always the supporter of the same general principles of morality, which alone constitute the sure foundation for either public or private excellence. We see in the most confidential outpourings of his heart a beautiful consistency with the thunder-tones of his oratory. There is no paltering with expediency, no mental evasion to qualify the purity of his doctrine. His moral analysis reaches even to the mind within, for, among a few detached sentences found in his handwriting, there is the following. "It is of as great importance for a man to

take heed what thought he entertains, as what company he keeps ; for they have the same effect on the mind. Bad thoughts are as infectious as bad company ; and good thoughts solace, instruct, and entertain the mind like good company ; and this is one great advantage of retirement, that a man may choose what company he pleases from within himself.” He here shows how necessary mental self-discipline was in his estimate of moral excellence. That such a man should be impracticable in the common and dirty intrigues of politics, is far more credible to us, than that there should have been any thing sordid or vulgar about him, according to Lord Brougham’s accusation.

No. The defects of Pitt, for such he doubtless had, were not of this character, but rather flowed from an excessive tenacity of his own convictions of right. Like all great orators known in history, his mind magnified much the subjects immediately offered to its attention. And this drove him often to insist upon points, as indispensable to be conceded to him, which a cooler judgment would have waved contesting without injurious consequences. With him the country was very often ruined, when the government was feebly conducted ; and the constitution was prostrate, when the minister had only inadvertently shaken one of its out-works. These were not merely figures of rhetoric with him, for his private notes show that he believed what he said. It is plain, also, that the character of his oratory was in no respect artificial. It was always warm from his heart, and partook of the exaggeration of his excited feelings. He was not of that numerous class, who think all public virtue concentrated in mildness of tone. Speaking of such in one of his letters, he says, “ ‘ Moderation, moderation ! ’ is the burden of the song among them. For myself, I am resolved to be in earnest for the public, and shall be a *scarecrow of violence* to the gentle warblers of the grove, the moderate whigs, and temperate statesmen.” And indeed such persons may be capital steersmen in calm weather, but they stand no chance in a storm. Moderation could never have driven Catiline out of the Senate at Rome, or the British Ministry to retrace their steps in the case of Wilkes’s expulsion, or the American people to obtain their independence as a nation of the earth. But, although this be true, it will equally sometimes happen, that they who are violent to

some purpose at one time, are needlessly so at another. It is one of the most difficult of an orator's tasks to define the exact line of his duty between the just and the extravagant, in this respect. And here we must admit, that Pitt's natural impetuosity not unfrequently led him into error.

King George the Third may have been a good man, but there can be little doubt at this time, that he was a very obstinate one. This obstinacy led him to quarrel, in turn, with almost every set of ministers arranged for him, until he was again driven to hold up Mr. Pitt as a shelter from their indignation. Such was the origin of the second ministry of that gentleman in 1766. The basis, without which no attempt to carry on the government in Great Britain can be successful, must necessarily be broad enough to combine a majority of the interests that sway both houses of Parliament. But the materials, to which Pitt appears to have been limited, were extraordinarily narrow. An unfortunate difference of opinion, at the outset, with Lord Temple, the nature of which is not precisely defined, deprived him of the coöperation which he had expected from him, and drove him to the selection of others, either not cordial to him, or opposed to his opinions. The consequence was an administration, which has been too admirably described by Burke ever to require any other historian. Pitt himself chose for his position a peerage, and one of the less responsible posts, that of Lord Privy Seal; the reasons for which, it is not perfectly easy to understand. We perceive, that, in a note to the present edition, the editors attribute his decision to a desire on his part to be removed from a scene for which his age, and his shattered constitution, were making him unfit. But this reason, if valid at all, should have prevented his acceptance of the direction of the government, for he could not but have foreseen, as clearly as Lord Chesterfield did, that his promotion was, what the latter called it, a fall upstairs, and that he left no coadjutor whom he could depend upon in the place he was quitting. We rather lean to the belief, that even this great man was dazzled for a moment by the lustre of a peerage, and regarded it as the natural reward of a long life of public service, without considering the difficulties in which the acceptance of it at this moment would immediately involve him. Such is human nature, even in its noblest modifications; and we must not refuse to

look at it because it will not appear uniformly perfect. If there was an infirmity of purpose here, he paid for it pretty dearly. The state of mind into which he was thrown, brought on a constant uneasiness from gout, a disease to which he had been from early life a martyr, and an unwillingness, as well as inability, to take any part in the conduct of affairs. The King appears to have been anxious to go on with the advantage, which the mere use of his name had given him ; but the acting ministers soon disagreed among themselves, and a majority of them, probably with the royal assent, adopted a line of policy towards America and the East India Company, wholly at variance with the principles of the nominal premier. Lord Chatham resigned, the Chancellor Camden and Lord Shelburne also retired, and, after a little vacillation, that administration was formed, which is well known in America under the designation of Lord North's.

There were not wanting those in England, and Horace Walpole is their spokesman to posterity, who charged Lord Chatham with covering a wilful desertion of his duties under the plea of illness. But we perceive nothing in his character to justify such an accusation, and we know, that there were occasionally throughout his career, long periods, when, whether in opposition or in power, he was completely retired from the scene. We see by the letters in the present collection, that any talk of business during his paroxysms, had so unfavorable an effect upon his complaints, that his wife, who loved him almost to idolatry, was unwilling to be the bearer, even of any message, which she foresaw would agitate him, although she appears to have generally been his amanuensis in all cases of a strictly confidential nature, and the medium through whom his replies were always communicated, when he was unable to draw them up himself. The letters to the King, which he dictated, breathe a strong hope of recovery, and a desire to retain his position as long as there was any prospect in his mind of becoming ultimately useful in it. The idea of dissimulation, carried on to so great an extent as this would indicate, is not only at war with all the notions we have of his character, but is utterly absurd. Yet such is the harshness, with which the world commonly judges public men, that this notion was for a time generally entertained in England, and had a temporary effect in cooling the popular admiration of the man. It is observed by his

biographer, that his retirement from office, which in 1757 and in 1761 had been marked by the warmest demonstrations of public enthusiasm, in 1768 scarcely excited an observation.

The mental quiet, which complete retirement from politics gave him, had a favorable effect upon the health of Lord Chatham, and he again came forward to lead an opposition against the proceedings in the case of Wilkes and the American policy. Notwithstanding the long intervals that often took place in his attendance in the House of Lords, his appearance there was always attended with immense effect upon the popular feeling; and the speeches which he made during this period are the only ones that have come down in a shape to interest the present generation. His course in opposition to the American war earned for him a great popularity in this country, which yet remains, notwithstanding his final declaration against surrendering the point of our independence. But he found himself unable to effect much, by reason of the internal disagreement among those with whom he was obliged to act. With the Rockingham party he had, for some reason or other, never been cordial, and he was too independent not to find himself sometimes running counter to the popularity-hunting devices of his City-of-London friends. He seems to have been upon terms of more confidential intimacy with Lord Shelburne, than with any one else; and to him he accordingly addressed a succession of letters, which are contained in the collection before us, and which give a tolerable insight into the state of his mind and the difficulties by which he was surrounded. We extract the following as a specimen.

“THE EARL OF CHATHAM TO THE EARL OF SHELBURNE.

“Sunday Evening, November 11, 1770.

“My dear Lord,—I am heartily glad that you arrived in town, because I am always truly glad of the opportunities of exchanging sentiments on the state of this devoted country. As for the various and extensive ill consequences of a delay” [this refers to a fresh petition and remonstrance of the City to the King], “which infatuation alone could produce (the bottom admitted to be sound), they have all fallen upon the delayers, and nothing remains but the smaller or greater degree of diminution of weight and efficacy in whatever steps they take in assertion of rights they defend. Disgusted though your Lordship sup-



poses I may be, at these egregious errors, I will not say I am. My experience would have given me very little, if I had not learned to view without surprise, and with much of pity and of good-will, not of contempt, the weaknesses of the well-intentioned, absorbed too often in smaller things, and neglecting and losing the critical moments for the execution of greater.

“ There is also, I perceive, reason to fear a race of frivolous and ill-placed popularity about press-warrants. I am determined to resist this ill-judged attempt to shake the public safety. In this state of things, I shall persevere to do my duty to my country, determined by principle, though unanimated by hope. As to what the City now intends to do, I wish to hear nothing of it ; resolved to applaud and defend what I think right, and to disapprove what shall appear to me wrong and untenable. All the rest is to me, my dear Lord, nothing. The sooner I have the pleasure to embrace your Lordship, the happier I shall be.”

— Vol. III. pp. 484, 485.

Another letter to the same person is too remarkable to be omitted. The Irish House of Commons favored a tax upon the property of absentees, which pressed so hard upon many of the Whig nobility, as to lead to their resistance of it ; and by their influence the ministry in England were finally compelled to put a stop to the measure. Lord Shelburne, himself an Irish landholder, consulted Lord Chatham as to the course proper to be pursued in Parliament, and received several letters in reply, from one of which we take the following passage.

“ The other important affair, which I understand is resolved to be brought upon the scene, is not of a nature to be laid by till a future opportunity ; as your Lordship does me the honor to command me to trouble you with my sentiments relating to it, before it comes on. By the singularity in which I find I stand as to my notions, it might be as well to be quite silent ; but, if Lord Shelburne orders, I am willing to be indiscreet. I must ask permission to be short, as my hand will not follow my mind.

“ Allow me, then, my dear Lord, to say, in one word, that any question, proposition, resolution, or declaration in Parliament here, censuring, branding, or forbidding in future a tax laid in a committee of supply, upon Ireland, in the Irish House of Commons, appears to me to be fatal. Were my information less authentic, I should think it impossible, that the axe could be so laid to the root of the most sacred, fundamental right of the

Commons, by any friends to liberty. The justice or policy of the tax on absentees is not the question; and on these, too, endless arguments may be maintained, pro and con. The single question is, Have the Commons of Ireland exceeded the powers lodged with them by the essential constitution of Parliament? I answer, They have not! and the interference of the British Parliament would, in that case, be unjust, and the measure destructive of all fair correspondence between England and Ireland for ever. Were it possible for me to attend the House of Lords, I would, to the utmost of my power, oppose any interference of Parliament here upon this matter, and enter my protest upon the journals against it.

“ Thus, my dear Lord, I have, with abundant temerity, sent your Lordship an insignificant, solitary opinion. It is pure in the source, flowing from the old-fashioned Whig principles; and, if defective in discernment, very replete with conviction. I make no difficulty to write by the post, meaning to have no concealment of my sentiments on this important object. On the contrary, I wish to have it known, that I am strenuously against any interference of Parliament here, in any shape whatever, upon this matter.

“ I have now, my dear Lord, only to add, that I grieve to find myself constrained, by irresistible conviction, to set my single opinion against that powerful stream, that bears down all before it. I am persuaded of the rectitude of their intentions; but not the less alarmed at the certain confusion this infatuated counsel will plunge us in. What extenuation shall I, at last, offer to your Lordship for all the above presumptions? I cannot read over, without blushing, opinions so decided, standing alone as I do; and yet I will own, at the same time, that I should feel more shame, if, in a conjuncture like this, I hesitated to declare them. Let me, then, throw myself upon the candor of my judge, in full confidence, that he would pardon any crime rather than insincerity. I am ever, &c.

“ CHATHAM.”

— Vol. IV. pp. 319 – 321.

It will be immediately perceived, that the question involved was the exact converse of the one growing out of the British policy towards America, but that both rest substantially upon the same general principle. It is to the honor of Lord Chatham, that he saw it as clearly in the one case, where his own personal interests were somewhat concerned, as he did in the other, where it was a purely public question. But what is creditable to him rather serves to show, in a

stronger light, how little of principle guided the course of the Rockingham Whigs. For, whilst they went considerably beyond him in their disposition to concede to America, they were not ashamed to urge a stretch of power by the sovereign in behalf of their own interests in Ireland. It is not to be wondered, if, under these circumstances, Lord Chatham and the Whigs found it difficult to keep upon the same general line of conduct, or that the closing act of the life of the former should have proved a public declaration of their disagreement. It is not impossible, that the rigid adherence, manifested by Lord Chatham, to the right of sovereignty of Britain over her Colonies, might, had he lived, have once more converted the hatred of the King to him into fawning, and have drawn him in to attempt a reconciliation long after it had become impossible. There can be no doubt, that he saw, with the peculiar intuition of genius, the consequences of the enormous blunder, that had been committed by the passage of the Stamp Act; but it is not so clear, that he ever fully understood, how hopeless was any chance of reconciliation. If he had done so, he would scarcely have proposed his conciliatory bill, which Dr. Franklin ought never to have encouraged him to hope would prove satisfactory. Fortunate was it, perhaps, for his fame, that the splendid termination of his career, whilst it blazed with the fire of his patriotic devotion, prevented him from attempting what could only have resulted in a mortifying failure and disgrace.

Turning from the view of Lord Chatham's public career, and going back some years, let us notice those excellent private letters, written by him to his nephew, Thomas Pitt, Lord Camelford, which Lord Grenville originally published. They were written at about the period when, as we have already, in the earlier part of this article, shown, the author deemed himself at the crisis of his political fortunes, and when, owing to the death of Mr. Pelham, it became indispensable for him decidedly to resist the effect of the King's bitter dislike of him, or else to suffer it to crush him for ever. At such a time, nothing would have been more natural than some effusion of spleen in his more private moments, some indirect allusions to the bad passions of men, from the operation of which he thought himself at the moment suffering, clothed, indeed, in general aphorisms, but deduced

from particulars then present in his mind ; perhaps some bitterness of tone against human nature in general. These would have been the indications of a mere ambitious politician and disappointed place-hunter, such as many of his contemporaries strove to describe him. But, instead of them, what do we see but the emanations of a spirit of the noblest kind that can adorn a mortal ? After giving his nephew some excellent maxims for his guidance at college in his intercourse with his companions, he breaks out into the following strain.

“ I come now to the part of the advice I have to offer to you, which most nearly concerns your welfare, and upon which every good and honorable purpose of your life will assuredly turn ; I mean the keeping up in your heart the true sentiments of religion. If you are not right towards God, you can never be so towards man ; the noblest sentiment of the human breast is here brought to the test. Is gratitude in the number of a man’s virtues ? If it be, the highest Benefactor demands the warmest returns of gratitude, love, and praise. ‘ *Ingratum qui dixerit, omnia dixit.*’ If a man wants this virtue, where there are infinite obligations to excite and quicken it, he will be likely to want all others towards his fellow-creatures, whose utmost gifts are poor, compared to those he daily receives at the hands of his never-failing Almighty Friend. ‘ Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth,’ is big with the deepest wisdom. ‘ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom ; and an upright heart, that is understanding.’ This is eternally true, whether the wits and rakes of Cambridge allow it or not. Nay, I must add of this religious wisdom, ‘ Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace,’ whatever your young gentlemen of pleasure think of a whore and a bottle, a tainted health and battered constitution.

“ Hold fast, therefore, by this sheet-anchor of happiness, religion. You will often want it in the times of most danger, the storms and tempests of life. Cherish true religion as precious as you will fly, with abhorrence and contempt, superstition and enthusiasm. The first is the perfection and glory of the human nature ; the two last the depravation and disgrace of it. Remember, the essence of religion is, a heart void of offence towards God and man ; not subtle, speculative opinions, but an active, vital principle of faith. The words of a heathen were so fine, that I must give them to you ;

‘ *Compositum jus, fasque animo ; sanctosque recessus  
Mentis, et incoctum generoso pectus honesto.*’

“Go on, my dear child, in the admirable dispositions you have towards all that is right and good, and make yourself the love and admiration of the world.” — Vol. I. pp. 73 – 76.

We cannot forbear to admit one more passage.

“You much overrate the obligation, whatever it be, which youth has to those who have trod the paths of the world before them, for their friendly advice how to avoid the inconveniences, dangers, and evils, which they themselves may have run upon for want of such timely warnings, and to seize, cultivate, and carry forward towards perfection those advantages, graces, virtues, and felicities, which they may have totally missed, or stopped short in the generous pursuit. To lend this helping hand to those who are beginning to tread the slippery way, seems, at best, but an office of common humanity to all ; but to withhold it from one we truly love, and whose heart and mind bear every genuine mark of the very soil proper for all the amiable, manly, and generous virtues to take root and bear their heavenly fruit, — inward, conscious peace, fame amongst men, public love, temporal and eternal happiness, — to withhold it, I say, in such an instance, would deserve the worst of names.

“I am greatly pleased, my dear young friend, that you do me the justice to believe I do not mean to impose any yoke of authority upon your understanding and conviction. I wish to warn, admonish, instruct, enlighten, and convince your reason, and so determine your judgment to right things, when you shall be made to see that they are right ; not to overbear, and impel you to adopt any thing, before you perceive it to be right or wrong, by the force of authority.

“I hear, with great pleasure, that Locke lay before you, when you wrote last to me ; and I like the observation that you make from him, that we must use our own reason, not that of another, if we would deal fairly by ourselves, and hope to enjoy a peaceful and contented conscience. This precept is truly worthy of the dignity of rational natures.

“But here, my dear child, let me offer one distinction to you, and it is of much moment ; it is this, — Mr. Locke’s precept is applicable only to such opinions as regard moral or religious obligations, and which, as such, our own consciences alone can judge and determine for ourselves. Matters of mere expediency, that affect neither honor, morality, or religion, were not in that great and wise man’s view ; such are the usages, forms, manners, modes, proprieties, decorum, and all those numberless ornamental little acquirements, and genteel well-bred attentions, which constitute a proper, graceful, amiable, and noble beha-

viour. In matters of this kind, I am sure your own reason, to which I shall always refer you, will at once tell you, that you must, at first, make use of the experience of others ; in effect, see with their eyes, or not be able to see at all ; for the ways of the world, as to its usages and exterior manners, as well as to all things of expediency and prudential considerations, a moment's reflection will convince a mind as right as yours, must necessarily be to inexperienced youth, with ever so fine natural parts, a *terra incognita*. As you would not, therefore, attempt to form notions of China or Persia, but from those who have travelled in those countries, and the fidelity and sagacity of whose relations you can trust, so will you as little, I trust, prematurely form notions of your own, concerning that usage of the world (as it is called) into which you have not yet travelled, and which must be long studied and practised, before it can be tolerably well known.

“ I can repeat nothing to you of so infinite consequence to your future welfare, as to conjure you not to be hasty in taking up notions and opinions. Guard your honest and ingenuous mind against this main danger of youth. With regard to all things that appear not to your reason, after due examination, evident duties of honor, morality, or religion, (and in all such as do, let your conscience and reason determine your notions and conduct,) — in all other matters, I say, be slow to form opinions, keep your mind in a candid state of suspense, and open to full conviction when you shall procure it, using in the mean time the experience of a friend you can trust, the sincerity of whose advice you will try and prove by your own experience hereafter, when more years shall have given it to you.” — Vol. 1. pp. 81 – 84.

It is remarked in Lord Brougham's ingenious but rather disparaging estimate of the character of Lord Chatham, that, “ if the test of a great man be, that he is in advance of his age, then does he fail in meriting the title.” We are not precisely sure that such a test can very fairly be applied to statesmen, or that, granting it to be a proper one, it is easy precisely to apply it. If Lord Chatham be measured by the men around him, by Robert Walpole, Chesterfield, Granville, Newcastle, Fox, Legge, the Grenvilles, or Bute, it would not be difficult to decide the point. If he be brought in contrast even with Lord Mansfield, is he not the representative of the modern principles of political liberty against the more timid, conservative leanings to arbitrary power of the great Judge ? Is it nothing, that, in an age of corruption, Lord

Chatham should have struck out a new path in the administration of the government ; that he should have refused to rely upon combinations whether in or out of power ; that he should have striven to introduce a wholly new standard of official conduct into the various branches of the public service ? The advance of Lord Chatham to power appears, to our judgment, to constitute a new era in the government of the country. It was a stride of the popular principle to the overthrow of the oligarchy, which had always ruled it. His system of policy was, it is true, a British system ; for we have already shown by a passage from one of his letters, that he had little confidence in that universal philanthropy, which wastes the human affections by seeking to spread them over infinite space. But we see no trace of hostility to the prosperity of other nations. His vigorous prosecution of the war with France, appears to have been wisely designed to accelerate the great result of peace. He had none of that sort of selfish passion, which instigated Napoleon Bonaparte to play with human lives, as a species of agreeable game of chess. Even his resistance to the independence of America was founded in the belief, that a union of the Anglo-Saxon race, under the same general laws, all over the globe, would prove in the end for the advantage of the whole. In this, it is true, he may have been mistaken ; but the very slight degree of cordiality which has thus far been established between the separated portions, does not tend to show, that much progress has been made in reducing the opposite theory to practice. Though Lord Chatham may have been wrong, it is by no means yet certain that his critic is in the right.

What, then, we would ask, does Lord Chatham want in order to deserve the title of a great man ? If it be answered, the spirit of modern innovation, then he must fail of obtaining it, for he was not in any sense a reformer. Among the pigmies of his time, he was a giant in moral and intellectual power ; but he was not inclined to use his power either to overturn or to destroy. Even down to this day, nobody has come out of the political slough in Great Britain, with less of defilement than he, or has left a fame so pure for succeeding generations to emulate as well as to admire. O that it were more common in America to study the principles at the foundation of his career ! But, great as may be the advantages of our institutions in many respects, it is to be feared, that

they do not encourage the cultivation of very lofty views of moral duty. The popular voice is omnipotent, whether it be right, or whether it be wrong. The exercise of individual judgment is lost in the vastness of universal sophistry, and the voice of conscience is stifled in the turbulent ocean of party contention. Violence is too apt to be substituted for right, and the rule of the majority for the power of truth. These are evils, which we must try to correct as we may, and, if not cured, which we must try to bear. But, if there be a remedy, we think that it must be found in the study of examples of the noble and highminded of the race.

We have done with Lord Chatham as a statesman ; but, before we close this article, we propose to add a few words respecting his character as an orator. And here again it surprises us, how little justice has been done him by those who have eulogized him in his own country. The charge made against him, is, however, the same that is advanced against the great orators of antiquity, namely, that they are defective in argument. That Lord Brougham should have urged this objection, is not surprising to us ; because we know the peculiar mental habits which the legal profession almost invariably establishes. But it does seem strange when brought forward by Horace Walpole. If mere argument were the sum total of oratory, then would lawyers be generally orators ; which, we apprehend, is not agreeable to the common experience. But when the various accessories which really do give the orator his power over his fellow-men come in aid of the enunciation of inflexible moral truth, arranged with simple logical accuracy, the ornaments are so much more palpable to the first observation than the argument, that many infer the latter cannot be there. The reason why a purely legal argument can seldom be oratory, however strict may be the logic used in it, is to be found in the fact, that it is commonly wanting in that indispensable element of durability, a firm substratum of general truths. Without that as a foundation, reasoning is a mere intellectual play at foils. With it, a figure of speech, a question, an exclamation, even an adjuration, becomes a stronger argument than major, minor, and conclusion. The celebrated invocation in the "Oration on the Crown," would have been a puerility, if it had not been sustained by the truth. As it was, it was an argument more forcible than a library of mi-



nute reasoning. The questions addressed to Catiline conveyed an argument, that drove him out of the city more certainly than an elaborate demonstration of his crime. These were all deductions from a state of facts, the certainty of which it was superfluous for the orator to demonstrate, and which he felt he had a right to use without demonstrating. Much, by every speaker who hopes within any reasonable compass to affect his hearers, must be taken for granted. And as in geometry, after a proposition has been once proved, it may be always cited without repeating the details of the solution, so in oratory, what is understood equally by the hearers and the speaker, may be likewise dismissed without the formality of proof. It is herein, that many appear to us to confound the opposite provinces of the spoken address, and the written dissertation. The first always presuming a previous acquaintance with the persons before whom it is to be delivered, the skill of the speaker is best shown in the choice of his topics, leaping over things already familiar to them, and dwelling only upon such as need to be established. The second, on the contrary, to be complete, must equally embrace every part of a subject ; and, being liable to the scrutiny of many whom the author may never have heard of, can omit nothing essential to the proof on the ground of its being already understood. The object of the one is to persuade instantly ; of the other, to convince after deliberation. When, therefore, the style of dissertation is used in oratory, the result is uniformly a deficiency in the fascination, which makes eloquence so desirable a gift. And when, on the contrary, oratory runs into dissertation, it seldom gives the satisfaction produced by thorough demonstration. Both lean upon argument as the main stay, but use it differently. In the one case, many threads of the texture may with propriety be concealed, and many covered with embroidery ; whilst, in the other, the value consists in having them all equally and distinctly visible.

We are not of those, therefore, who think that the works of Demosthenes or Cicero could have come down to us as they have done, with the applause of gathering ages, if they were defective in argument. For we must repeat our belief, that truth is at the bottom of all durable literary fame. We are aware how fashionable it has become of late to affirm, for example, that the “ *Oration on the Crown* ” does not answer

the argument of the crafty Æschines. But the error of this opinion seems to us to lie in the failure to make the discrimination we have pointed out. In oratory it may appear a sign of weakness to attempt an elaborate reply to that which the auditors already have in their own minds refuted. Contempt is often a strong argument, in cases where the justice of it is visible to all present. The fact asserted by Plutarch, that the judges in this celebrated trial were of the political party friendly to the plaintiff, and opposed to the great orator, sufficiently shows, that this must have been a proper, and, indeed, the only weapon to use here. Do not we in America know enough of party politics to understand, that men are not likely to sacrifice one of their own friends to a fiction, however beautifully told? Had they believed Æschines to be in the right, as many in modern times have done, and among others Lord Brougham himself, a majority might have been persuaded, it is true, not to condemn Demosthenes, but at least one fifth of the number would have interposed a shield between their own partisan and unmerited punishment. As it was, the failure to get even that small proportion exposed Æschines to the legal penalty for malicious prosecution. What other proof is then needful to show, that the accusation was idle and frivolous? And if so, what style of spoken argument more effective to establish that point than the one adopted by Demosthenes?

Just so is it with the great Roman orator, whose high fame never would have sustained itself had it depended upon mere flowers of rhetoric. If there is one peculiarity more striking about him to us than another, it is his complete mastery over the science of logic. With him dialectics was at the fingers' ends. The proper treatment of questions was reduced by him almost to the regularity of mathematical arrangement. Yet we have been told, that argument is not his merit. Would that the diffuse talkers of our day, whether at the bar or in the senate-house, condescended to learn from him how to reason. The characteristic of his oratory is consummate art in the disposition of his matter, which, betraying itself somewhat too strongly in his early, but admirable effort in behalf of Sextus Roscius, becomes subdued by practice, until it wears the appearance of nature in the Oration for Milo. Of the pains he took to bring himself to perfection, we have his own account, familiar to all readers. It can scarcely be denied, that no man ever existed, who has

approached him in extensive acquaintance at once with the theory and the practice of his art. In Demosthenes we are most struck with the concentration of his meaning, the beauty and strength of his collocation of words, and the force of his images ; whilst, in the Roman, we feel in a moment the superabundance of his intellectual riches, the skill in his selection of topics, the certainty of his combinations to produce any given result, and the harmony of his sentences. Both show an intense admiration of the morally beautiful and true ; both, an unintermitted application to their art ; but each of them does so in his particular way. The one often appears as if under the effect of inspiration ; the other shows a mortal nature refined by labor to its highest possible point of perfection.

We cannot, from the very imperfect specimens remaining to us of the oratory of Lord Chatham, venture to compare him with the great masters of antiquity. He might, perhaps, have equalled them, had he chosen to take the pains which they did to give the last finish to his productions. But oratory seems not to have been studied by him upon the grand scale which they adopted ; and, contrary to what Plutarch affirms of Demosthenes, his most extemporaneous were his best speeches. It is said, that his elaborate eulogy of General Wolfe proved his greatest failure. Yet, from the fragments which we possess, it seems not at all difficult to account for the power he is universally allowed to have possessed. It consisted in the first place of that same extraordinary elevation of moral tone, which made the Greek philosopher Panætius give the palm of oratory to Demosthenes. But this was sustained by lucid and forcible arguments, and adorned by strong and happy imagery. Horace Walpole has recorded the effect produced by his comparison of the union between Henry Fox and the Duke of Newcastle, to the junction of the Rhone and the Saone, “ this a gentle, feeble, languid stream, and, though languid, of no depth ; the other, a boisterous and impetuous torrent ; but they meet at last.” This was in a speech, that, in the end, effected the overthrow of that combination against which it was directed. Introduced into the midst of a nervous argument against the whole system of ministerial measures adopted at that time, it seemed like a burst of thunder overhead after fast and continued rain. Of the speeches which

we know the best, those delivered after his removal from the seat of his greatest power, the characteristics are rapid reasoning, and novelty as well as force of illustration. Of such a style it is impossible to give much idea by brief examples. That his speeches are defective in arrangement, is certainly true, as all must be that are delivered upon the impulse of the moment ; but we cannot agree with Lord Brougham in calling them prolix. So far from it, we know of no modern speaker, who can compare with him in the manner in which he concentrates his argument upon general maxims, and the quickness and force with which he draws his conclusions. According to our sense of the word, Mr. Burke is prolix ; but we cannot apply the same epithet to Chatham. The latter alone of all modern orators reminds one at all of the peculiarities of Demosthenes, and surely prolixity was not among these. He alone seems to have imitated that ancient orator in founding his manner upon the study of Thucydides, and to have succeeded in borrowing some of that historian's power. We do not know of another modern name, that bids fair to be long remembered in this art, unless it be that of Burke. But Burke is not, strictly speaking, an orator. His style, though abounding in many varieties of merit, is nevertheless, in general rather that of philosophical disquisition than of oratory. It is fascinating when read in the closet, but we cannot readily imagine it to be delivered to listening and enraptured auditors ; it is better calculated to elevate their opinions of the knowledge and abilities of the speaker, than to force unwilling assent to the propositions he advanced. Those who saw the elder Pitt rise in the House of Commons, were seldom inclined to leave it until he sat down again ; while it often happened to Burke to become the signal for a general dispersion.

We perceive in the work before us two letters deserving of a passing notice, because they were privately addressed to Lord Chatham by that singular being, known under the name of Junius. The passage of time has had no very favorable effect upon the reputation of that writer, particularly since it has given to another and impartial generation the opportunity to estimate the value of his patriotism, and to weigh the motives of his censures. It may be doubted, whether the same sort of papers, if written at the present day, would produce one half of the effect they did when the novelty and

boldness of the manner contributed so large a share to their success. It is worthy of remark, that the first note of Junius to Lord Chatham, towards the close of his second ministry, bears date more than a year before the first appearance of Junius, under that name, in Woodfall's paper. It is so characteristic of the malignant temper of the writer, that we must try to make room for it.

“JUNIUS TO THE EARL OF CHATHAM.

“London, January 2, 1768.

“MY LORD. If I were to give way to the sentiments of respect and veneration which I have always entertained for your character, or to the warmth of my attachment to your person, I should write a longer letter than your Lordship would have time or inclination to read. But the information which I am going to lay before you, will, I hope, make a short one not unworthy your attention. I have an opportunity of knowing something, and you may depend on my veracity.

“During your absence from administration, it is well known, that not one of the ministers has either adhered to you with firmness, or supported, with any degree of steadiness, those principles, on which you engaged in the King's service. From being their idol at first, their veneration for you has gradually diminished, until at last they have absolutely set you at defiance.

“The Chancellor, on whom you had particular reasons to rely, has played a sort of fast and loose game, and spoken of your Lordship with submission or indifference, according to the reports he heard of your health; nor has he altered his language until he found you were really returning to town.

“Many circumstances must have made it impossible for you to depend much upon Lord Shelburne or his friends; besides that, from his youth, and want of knowledge, he was hardly of weight, by himself, to maintain any character in the cabinet. The best of him is, perhaps, that he has not acted with greater insincerity to your Lordship than to former connexions.

“Lord Northington's conduct and character need no observation. A singularity of manners, added to a perpetual affectation of discontent, has given him an excuse for declining all share in the support of government, and at last conducted him to his great object, a very high title, considering the species of his merit, and an opulent retreat. Your Lordship is best able to judge of what may be expected from this nobleman's gratitude.

“Mr. Conway, as your Lordship knows by experience, is every thing to every body, as long as by such conduct he can

maintain his ground. We have seen him in one day, the humble prostrate admirer of Lord Chatham; the dearest friend of Rockingham and Richmond; fully sensible of the weight of the Duke of Bedford's party; no irreconcilable enemy to Lord Bute; and at the same time very ready to acknowledge Mr. Grenville's merit as a financier. Lord Hertford is a little more explicit than his brother, and has taken every opportunity of treating your Lordship's name with indignity.

"But these are facts of little moment. The most considerable remains. It is understood by the public, that the plan of introducing the Duke of Bedford's friends entirely belongs to the Duke of Grafton, with the secret concurrence, perhaps, of Lord Bute, but certainly without your Lordship's consent, if not absolutely against your advice. It is also understood, that, if you should exert your influence with the King to overturn this plan, the Duke of Grafton will be strong enough, with his new friends, to defeat any attempt of that kind; or, if he should not, your Lordship will easily judge to what quarter his Grace will apply for assistance.

"My Lord, the man who presumes to give your Lordship these hints admires your character without servility, and is convinced, that, if this country can be saved, it must be saved by Lord Chatham's spirit, by Lord Chatham's abilities."

— Vol. III. pp. 303–305.

Even supposing that the charges made against the persons here mentioned, who constituted Lord Chatham's administration, had been true, which, as it respects most of them, were unquestionably false, we are at a loss to perceive what good motive could have prompted this secret information. That Lord Shelburne and General Conway were about to be removed from their places in a few days, must have been known to a person so accurately informed as Junius generally shows himself, inasmuch as it is mentioned as the news of the day by Lord Chesterfield, so long before as the 27th of December. The Duke of Grafton, finding it impossible to carry on the government without the aid of the Bedford interest, had sacrificed one portion of the cabinet to make room for it. The thing was done; and, if Lord Chatham had not been apprized of it, he was probably the only public man in the country who did not know it. He was lying at his country seat, so utterly disabled for all business by disease, that his wife would not consent, even to mention to him certain matters relating to his office, for his inattention to which he was

threatened with a formal motion against him in the House of Lords. If Junius supposed, that he would pay that deference to an anonymous letter, which he was refusing to the most earnest entreaties of his nearest relations, he must have had a singular opinion of the person whom he addressed. If, on the other hand, he believed him really ill, he certainly could not have expected to make him better by the news he was so anxious to communicate. But it is not probable that he was sincere even in his professions of personal admiration of Lord Chatham. Many of the miscellaneous letters ascribed to this writer, under different signatures, at this time, in Woodfall's edition of Junius, are so bitterly abusive, that the editors of the present work, in a note to the letter we have extracted, refuse to believe that the same person could have written them all. But we can credit almost any thing of Junius, and this the more readily, that his very first published address under that signature deliberately charges Lord Chatham with bringing on the division of the British empire solely for the sake of displacing Mr. George Grenville. For, since that gentleman's fall as minister took place so early as 1765, it is plain, that this opinion must have been formed long before he wrote the last sentence of the above-quoted private letter to him of 1768. An honest man could scarcely have reconciled it to himself to declare him alone likely to save the country, whom he, at the same time, considered guilty of having risked the ruin of it merely for the sake of putting himself into office.

We perceive, that the editors have devoted some space to the admission of such evidence as they think goes to prove, that Sir Philip Francis was the true Junius. Among other facsimile autographs, in which the work abounds, are two, affording opportunity for a comparison of the handwriting of these persons. The only fair inference from which is, that, though their modes of writing differ very much from each other, the same person might, with equal ease to himself, have written in both.

The question, Who is Junius? is not one of very great interest to us, because we should be sorry to identify so bitter and dastardly a writer with any person of whom we now know nothing ill, or whom we are accustomed to see, historically, in a favorable light. Assuredly Sir Philip Francis would gain nothing by having the authorship fixed upon

him. And the proof, that he felt this to be true, is to be found in the fact of his resolute disavowal of all knowledge of it to the last day of his life. The striking defect in Junius is want of moral truth. His invective loses its point, when we discover, that it was equally directed against the innocent and the criminal, and is often based upon wholly insufficient foundations in fact. He strikes at the men of his day, whose public stations exposed them to his knife, with the ferocity of an assassin, and betrays only the weakness of passion, when a skilful master of fence, like John Horne, coolly throws up his weapon into the air. He pursues a man, who, whatever may have been his faults, was not, in any respect, so bad as he was represented, we mean the Duke of Bedford, with a malignity which even gloats over the untimely end of his only son, the Marquis of Tavistock. And yet he has the audacity, in another place, to say, that "personal enmity is a motive of action only for the Devil." It matters little with him what the degree of offence is, of which he constitutes himself the judge. All are equally worthy of the most intense indignation, whether they threaten the overturn of the British constitution, or the embezzlement of a few sticks of navy timber. Lord Mansfield is equally the worst man in the kingdom, whether he misdirect a jury on a slight point in a private cause, or be guilty of deliberately corrupting the "noble simplicity and free spirit of the Saxon laws." There is something in this uniformity of his invective, that defeats its own purpose ; for it betrays the absence either of the will or the power to make a moral discrimination in the use of it. Yet most young people are apt to lose sight of this truth in the fascination of his artful and brilliant style. It is this, which constitutes the danger to them in reading Junius. They learn to fancy, that strict truth is not essential to the power of a caustic style, and that a trivial offence is worthy of as harsh an array of epithets as the deepest crime. The imitation has been carried so far in the United States, that few readers of common intelligence put any faith at all in the solemn denunciations of public men, daily made in our party newspapers ; and thus the abuse of the privilege of attacking them, by a curiously compensating process of nature, furnishes them with a shelter against every attack. Perhaps the chief interest, which posterity may take in Junius, will centre upon the fact of the preservation



of his disguise ; and it may, after all, be best consulting his fame to permit him quietly to wear it.

Having now closed what we have to say upon the work before us, we cannot yet dismiss it without recommending the character of the person to whom it relates to the meditations of the younger generation in America. The nature of our institutions makes the study and the trials of political life familiar to a very large number of persons. And, as if to balance the benefit to them that results from this, it is much to be feared, that firmness and loftiness of moral principle are least apt to become the marked characteristics among them. The people are often more inexorable in their prejudices, than was King George the Second towards William Pitt, and require and obtain far more humiliating self-abasement than that individual ever would have submitted to even to gain the greatest prize of political power. It may be well for us, sometimes, to examine the exact nature of the limit, which undoubtedly exists, between the mere gratification of a selfish ambition and the performance of honorable duty ; — what conduct the former motive will palliate, and what the latter will justify. If we find, that the poor and unfriended William Pitt raised himself to the first rank among his country's benefactors, as well as to power and honors, by no dishonest arts but rather by the constant support of the most exalted principles of conduct, both in words and deeds, we shall be disposed to judge favorably the few concessions he was compelled to make to the pride of his sovereign and the selfishness of the aristocracy. If, on the other hand, we find him greedy of office, and profuse in the use of its privileges, sacrificing the principles of to-day to the predominating interests of to-morrow, an unsteady minister and a corrupt politician, then we shall be at no loss to infer the motives, that must have impelled his course. If we mistake not, the characteristic of Lord Chatham was that elevation of soul, which, though it is everywhere admired, rather strikes men from their knowledge of the rareness of its occurrence among them, than from a full comprehension of its grandeur. Yet what but that gives to the reminiscence of classical antiquity its still powerful influence on the feelings of us all ? Who is there, that looks to the history of the Celestial Empire or of the Turkish chiefs, to the dominions of Ghengis Khan or Tamerlane, for virtuous incite-

ment to victory over difficulties and temptations ? Who is there that can find, among the sands of Africa or the mines of the Indies, that “soul-exalting praise of doing well,” which the Greek poets sung with a lyre of deathless renown ? This is all that gives to fame its value, all that makes history more than the work of the naturalist’s pen. If there be a compensation for the sacrifices, which political honesty appears to cost, it must be found in the memory which honest statesmen leave behind them. And the death-stroke to Chatham, in the blaze of his fame, in the scene of his glory, may well stimulate all after generations to go through trials, even as by water and by fire, if they too may hope to gain in the end the same reward.

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ART. VI. — *Histoire de l’Art Moderne en Allemagne* ; par le Comte ATHANASE RACRYNSKI. Tome Premier : Paris : 1836. pp. 311. 4to. Tome Seconde : 1839. pp. 677. Tome Troisième : 1841. pp. 582.

THE appearance of these superb volumes has been hailed with delight by those to whom the extraordinary phenomena of German letters and art have been matters of thought and speculation. They are written in French, evidently for the purpose of carrying a knowledge of their interesting contents, through the medium of this universal language, beyond the comparatively small number of foreigners, who are familiar with the idiom of the Germans. The typographical execution is beautiful, and the engravings and woodcuts, that illustrate the text, are done in the best style, by the most skilful artists. Altogether the work is brought out with a luxury of ornament and type, corresponding to the taste of the author and the varied interest of the subject. Count Racrynski is said to be a nobleman of fortune ; that his pursuits have been patriotic and noble, is proved by this magnificent work, at once a great monument of the generous and elevated tastes of the author, and of the newborn genius for art, by which his country has been, during the last quarter of a century, so honorably distinguished.

Germany has, more than any other country, attracted the